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Foreigners Find Terror Exempts No One in Beirut

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BEIRUT, Lebanon, April 5 — A week ago, a British professor decided to rush his blond daughter, a student, out of West Beirut after a secretary at the French Embassy was kidnapped.

The secretary's abduction, three days before, deepened the apprehension among Westerners still in Beirut because it showed that foreign women were no longer immune from kidnapping.

The apprehension did not ease after the French secretary, Danielle Perez, was freed. The wife of a French businessman, for instance, dyed her hair jet black so she would not look quite as foreign.

For many months, Westerners, Eastern bloc nationals and even Arabs, Lebanese and non-Lebanese alike, have lived in constant fear of being kidnapped or killed. Now, after a new wave of abductions of foreigners in the last month, an even more oppressive atmosphere has settled on Beirut.

Bodyguards are no longer considered sufficient. "Scouts" have been hired. They are posted outside homes or offices to signal their employers when it is safe for them to venture out on the street.

Foreigners now avoid keeping a pattern for their movements, since most of those kidnapped were seized by gunmen while on their way to their offices.

At first, foreigners lived under the illusion that only Americans and French nationals were targets of the kidnappers, most of whom, if not all, are believed to be Shiite Moslem fundamentalists backed by the Iranian Government.

Two British kidnapping victims, Geoffrey Nash and Brian Levick, said they were freed after their Moslem abductors realized that they were not Americans. Nevertheless, the British Embassy closed its premises in West Beirut and confined its business to an annex it established in East Beirut.

Life in the eastern sector is no longer safe either. A revolt on March 12 by Christian militiamen against President Amin Gemayel raised the danger of violence among Christians.

Last month, the United States Embassy evacuated 29 staff members from its East Beirut annex to Cyprus. Threats by Moslem fundamentalists and the unstable situation in Christian areas were cited as the reasons.

Many Embassies Move

Most Western embassies have moved either totally or partly to Baabda, a Christian suburb of the capital where the presidential palace and the residence of the American Ambassador, Reginald Bartholomew, are situated. Those that remained in West Beirut are heavily guarded or run by skeleton staffs.

The Japanese and the West Germans are the least threatened, because, one authority here said, Tokyo and Bonn are on good terms with the Islamic Government in Teheran. There was not one policeman at the West Beirut residence of a West German diplomat when he gave a reception two months ago.

Nevertheless, the street where the West German Embassy is situated is closed to traffic by huge concrete blocks. The Japanese Government has decided not to repair its embassy in West Beirut, which was badly damaged by a rocket during fighting last year. "There is no guarantee that the embassy would not be wrecked again in future if we undertake repairs," a diplomat explained.

The diplomat is one of five Japanese Embassy officials left. Of a group that once numbered 1,000, only 9 Japanese are left in Lebanon.

Dutch Priest Is Slain

The diplomatic cocktail-party circle has dwindled to nil. There were more local friends than foreigners at a reception given by the Ambassador of the Netherlands for the wedding of a staff member last month.

But panic has now spread to the few Dutch nationals here after the body of a Dutch Jesuit priest, the Rev. Nicolas Kluiters, was recovered from a pit in eastern Lebanon this week. The priest, who had lived in Lebanon for many years, was kidnapped on March 14. He appeared to have been strangled.

Soviet bloc diplomats try to convey the impression that for them, business is as usual. But the Soviet Embassy is heavily guarded. The bomb shelter at the basement of the Soviet Cultural Center, in a separate building, was made livable again after the building was twice attacked by rockets last year.

Shiite fundamentalists took responsibility, saying that they were acting in solidarity with the Mujahedeen, the rebels who are fighting Soviet troops in Afghanistan.

The Islamic Holy War organization has taken responsibility for most of the kidnappings in the last year. Islamic Holy War is believed to be only a convenient title used by Shiite fundamentalists who uphold the principles of the Islamic revolution of Iran's religious leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

But at the same time, the two leaders of the Party of God — Shiite clerics and lay activists who strongly support the Khomeini regime — have deplored the abductions.

Photographed with Sheikh

Last month, the Party of God's spokesman, Sheikh Ibrahim al-Amin, agreed to have his picture taken with an American correspondent. He told the American that if he was ever kidnapped, he should show the photo to the gunmen and they would release him.

Nevertheless, the correspondent left town after learning that Terry A. Anderson, the chief Middle East correspondent of The Associated Press, was kidnapped on a West Beirut street in daylight only a day or two after he had interviewed Imam Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah, believed to be the spiritual guide of the Party of God.

Islamic Holy War took responsibility for kidnapping Mr. Anderson and for holding four other Americans seized in West Beirut in the last year. The four are William Buckley, a political officer at the American Embassy; the Rev. Benjamin Weir, a Presbyterian minister; the Rev. Lawrence Martin Jenco, a Roman Catholic priest, and Peter Kilburn, a librarian at the American University of Beirut.

Most Prominent American

A former president of the university, Dr. Malcom H. Kerr, was slain outside his office on campus 15 months ago. In the summer of 1982, the university's acting president, David S. Dodge, was abducted on campus; he was released after a year in captivity.

His abductors were described as Teheran-linked Shiites who were retaliating for the reported kidnapping two weeks before of three officials of the

Iranian Embassy at a Christian militia checkpoint north of Beirut.

Dr. Calvin H. Plimpton, Dr. Kerr's successor, is regarded in Beirut as a man of courage. He is the most prominent American living in the Moslem part of Beirut.

Several of the American professors have remained at the American University. They avoid being interviewed, but friends said they had resigned themselves to the danger of kidnapping. One, an Arabist, always carries with him a message in Arabic addressed to would-be kidnappers quoting verses from the Koran instructing the faithful to be kind to non-Moslems.

From 12,000 Americans living in Lebanon when the civil war broke out a decade ago, only 1,400 are here today. An American Embassy source said the majority of those remaining were Lebanese-Americans. Only about 250 American citizens are still in West Beirut, most of them associated with the university.

Tenth of Former Total

Some 2,500 foreign companies have move out of Beirut, which was once the Middle East's business and banking center.

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